

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

Too Many Bags
PREMISE - June 28, 2019

Elinor's Question: How can we avoid putting so many bags in the trash?

Logline: When Elinor and her friends give away oranges in specially decorated paper bags, which soon start filling the recycling bin, they realize it can be wasteful to use so many bags.

Curriculum Goals:

- **LS5d.** Begin to understand that animals and plants depend on other living things and nonliving things in the environment to meet some of their needs: Identify and observe the consequences of how plants and animals impact the environment (Elinor and her friends realize that their use of paper bags is making too much litter.)
- **ND4.** Appreciate the way that elements in the natural world change, interact, and are reused, and how we can organize our designed world to better fit and care for the environment (Elinor and her friends decide to only use paper bags when they really need them.)
- **SEP** – TBD at outline

Elinor, Olive, and Ari peer through the glass at the delicious treats at Mr. Raccoon's bakery. They decide to share a muffin, and when Elinor hands their money to Mr. Raccoon, he hands them their treat in a decorative paper bag. The kids eat happily while walking to Elinor's house, when she suddenly stops and points at an orange tree in her yard—she hadn't noticed before, but a lot of the oranges in the tree are ripe and ready to pick! Ari suggests they eat some, but Olive points out that the tree is overflowing with them—it's way too many oranges for the three of them to eat. Elinor looks at the paper bag with the muffin, and she has an idea: How about they play "store" and give the oranges away to the adults and kids in town, just like Mr. Raccoon sells treats at his bakery?

A short while later, they're all set up: Elinor has made a storefront out of cardboard, Ari has flown up into the tree to pick a stack of oranges, and Olive has decorated a stack of paper bags, just like Mr. Raccoon's. As Animal Town citizens walk by, the kids delight each of them with a free orange, presented in a decorative paper bag. Everything is going great, and the kids are happy that they've helped their neighbors—but then a paper bag with one of Olive's drawings on it blows by their booth. Ari catches it in his wing and brings the bag over to the recycling bin, but as soon as he looks in the bin, he says, "Uh, Elinor? Olive? We have a problem." The girls come over and see that the bin is full of their orange bags. And when a breeze picks up more of the bags and sends them flying all over town, it's a scramble to get those bags back into the recycling bin! They're glad that most of the Animal Town citizens have recycled their bags, but it's clearly a problem that so many bags have just ended up being wasted. As if to punctuate this point, the next free orange recipient, Mr. Elephant, accepts an orange in a bag, immediately removes the orange from the bag, recycles the bag, and puts the orange in his pocket.

"Hmm," says Elinor. "We use bags all the time. But maybe we don't always need to." Then she spots a banana sticking out of Mr. Elephant's other pocket. She asks him why he's not carrying it in a bag, and he explains that a banana doesn't need a bag—it has a peel, and that's like nature's own bag for the fruit inside. The kids realize that oranges have peels, too, and while it makes

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Commented [AEL1]: I'm wondering if this is the right question.

Commented [AEL2]: Not sure this is the right LG for this. Might be more Earth Science related since in this case, what they are doing is more human-related impacts. In the Framework, this might align: **Earth and Human Activity** (see also Social Studies Framework – Geography: Human-Environment Interactions)

• Understand that things people do to live comfortably can affect the world around them, but they can make choices that reduce their impacts on the land, water, air, and other living things

- Ask questions about and discuss examples of how humans use Earth's resources (including soil and water) to meet their needs (e.g., water can be used for drinking, washing, watering plants, putting out fires, boating, and fishing)
- Demonstrate an awareness of and the ability to discuss in simple terms the need for conservation, recycling, and respect for the environment (e.g., turning off lights and faucets, reusing materials for another activity, separating materials into recycling bins)
- Participate in simple activities to care for the environment (e.g., pick up and throw away litter, recycle plastic bottles and containers)

Commented [AEL3]: To meet this, we might need to better integrate the "elements in the natural world change, interact and are reused" piece of this goal.

Commented [AEL4]: If they give away, does that count as playing store?

Commented [AEL5]: Probably should get permission from Mom or Dad to pick these.

Commented [AEL6]: This is throwing me off. Wouldn't they want them to be recycled? What were they expecting the animals to do with them?

Commented [NE7R6]: I think the intention is to have the kids realize that there are just too many bags in the first place; the recycling container is so full that the overflow is causing litter. But I agree that we have to get the logic of how the kids process all of this to flow a little more naturally/on a kid level. I also think it's mature for the kids to have an opinion about the citizens of Animal Town having recycled the bags (as opposed to throwing them away).

sense for Mr. Raccoon to sell his muffins in bags—you don't want to carry a muffin in your pocket!—there's no need to give away an orange in a bag that will just be discarded. So Elinor and her friends go back to giving away the oranges without bags. And when Mr. Raccoon comes by, they give him an orange, plus the remaining paper bags to use in his bakery.

Sara Sweetman Notes:

Too Many Bags- I feel there needs to be more connections between using the bags and the environment. Do the bags that are blowing around block a hole so a small animal can't get out of their home? Kids/ preschoolers are not usually in charge of it a bag (reusable or disposable) are being used. Although encouraging reusable bags is a national initiative. I like the idea of teaching reusable verses disposable than teaching bag or no bag. Aside from the bag the idea of some fruit has outer layers that protect them is really more about how the seeds inside need to travel...

Commented [AEL8]: This seems a little disconnected from the central question.

Commented [AEL9]: Wonder if they could come up with a more eco-friendly way to carry the muffins too!

Commented [AEL10]: Totally agree with this and Elinor's question should relate to this.

Commented [AEL11]: Agree!

Commented [NE12R11]: Yes, same.